of India (GIPSA) after the charter of demands is received from all the Unions/Associations. Some of the Unions/Associations of Insurance Companies have demanded the settlement for a period of five years, while others have demanded for a lesser period.

Approval of CCEA for investment by foreign companies

*510. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA:
SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign companies whose original investment exceeded Rs. 600 crores in mid 90s were referred to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) for final approval;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether even a small increase in investment or even minor amendment in the letter of approval requires applications by such companies to be referred to CCEA;

(d) whether if these early entrants had instead entered India today in sectors where 100 per cent foreign equity is permitted they would have been entitled to automatic approval; and

(e) whether his Ministry will recommend liberalization of rules on this count to foreign investors who entered India in the early 1990s?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) This matter has already been answered in Lok Sabha Question No. 3309 on 15/4/2008. Policy on foreign investment has been progressively getting liberalized as a result of periodic review. In 1999, Press Note-7 was issued, which required approval of Cabinet Committee on Foreign Investment (CCFI), as it existed then (now it is CCEA), for any foreign investment proposal with original project cost of Rs. 600 crores or more. In such cases, any increase in the percentage of foreign equity where the initial approval was granted by CCFI or CCEA, the subsequent request for increase in the percentage would also require prior approval of FIPB/ Government. However, there would be no need for obtaining such prior approval of FIPB/ Government for any increase in the amount of foreign equity within the percentage of foreign equity already approved if the original project cost was less than Rs. 600 crores. The policy does not make any distinction in the quantum of increase: whether small or large; or in the extent of amendment in the letter of approval: whether minor or major. The stipulated threshold for CCEA approval is original project cost being more than Rs. 600 crores.

(d) As per extant policy, FDI in sectors where automatic route is available, there is no monetary ceiling on the total investment.

(e) FDI policy, including procedures, is reviewed on an ongoing basis through Inter-Ministerial consultations.

Employment of foreign pilots

*511. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a shortage of pilots in the Indian Civil Aviation sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total requirement of pilots by Civil Aviation sector and how Government proposes to meet the requirements;

(d) whether the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has invited foreign pilots to work for Indian Civil Aviation sector; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Civil aviation industry in the country is facing a shortage of approximately 1000 type rated pilots.

(c) With the present growth of the aviation industry, it has been estimated that in the next five years, 5000 additional pilots would be required for scheduled operations and 1000 pilots for non-scheduled and private operations. The Government has taken various steps to reduce the gap between demand and supply of skilled Indian pilots. These include increasing the age-limit of 65 years for pilots, upgradation and modernisation of training infrastructure of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) to enhance its training capacity from 40 to 100 pilots per year and reduce the training period, setting up of a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra for training 100 cadets and assistance to flying clubs by allocating trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation/Aero Club of India.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. The foreign pilots are employed by the airlines. Directorate General of Civil Aviation only validates the foreign licence as per rules.

Facilities for physically challenged air-passengers

*512. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian carriers are opposing the decision to provide mandatory free facilities to physically challenged passengers;

(b) if so, whether the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which had earlier proposed this in a draft civil aviation requirement, has re-sent its proposal to the Ministry with the views of Airlines;

(c) if so, whether Government has taken any final decision in this regard; and

(d) if so, whether any directions have been issued to all the Indian carriers to continue the free facilities to the physically challenged passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had